

## Preventing Heat-Related Illness

**Dress for the heat.** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors reflect away some of the sun's heat. Wear a hat or use an umbrella. Don't forget to apply Sunscreen often if out in the sun.

**Drink Water.** Water is the best drink in hot weather. Sugary drinks like soda or juice are not as good at cooling your body. Carry water with you and drink plenty of it, even if you don't feel thirsty.

**Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine.** These drinks dry out the body.

**Avoid using salt tablets** unless your doctor told you to take them.

**Slow down.** Avoid heavy activity. If you must be active, do it during the coolest part of the day, usually in the early morning.

**Take regular breaks** when active on a hot day. Find a cool place to rest. If you or someone else develops signs of a heat-related illness, stop the activity right away.

**Stay indoors** as much as possible. The best way to prevent heat-related illness is to stay indoors with air conditioning.

## Maryland Local Health Departments

Allegany County	(301) 759-5000
Anne Arundel County	(410) 222-7095
Baltimore City	(410) 396-4398
Baltimore County	(410) 535-5400
Calvert County	(410) 479-8030
Carroll County	(410) 857-5000
Cecil County	(410) 996-5550
Charles County	(410) 609-6900
Dorchester County	(410) 228-3223
Frederick County	(301) 600-1029
Garrett County	(301) 334-7777
Harford County	(410) 878-1500
Howard County	(410) 313-6300
Kent County	(410) 778-1350
Montgomery County	(410) 777-1000
Prince George's County	(410) 883-7879
Queen Anne's County	(410) 758-0720
St. Mary's County	(410) 475-4300
Somerset County	(410) 523-1700
Talbot County	(410) 819-5600
Washington County	(410) 313-3200
Wicomico County	(410) 749-1244
Worcester County	(410) 632-1100

### Maryland Department of Health And Mental Hygiene

Office of Preparedness and Response  
300 West Preston Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2399  
(410) 767-0823

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The Department, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensures that qualified individuals with disabilities are given an opportunity to participate in and benefit from DHMH services, programs, benefits and employment opportunities.

# HEAT EMERGENCY AWARENESS

*Summer is here again,  
and that means fun and  
activities under the sun!  
Please remember that  
extreme heat and sunlight  
can make you sick, and may  
even endanger your life.*

### Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

**Martin O'Malley, Governor**  
**Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor**  
**Joshua M. Sharfstein, Secretary, DHMH**

## Heat-Related Emergencies

*Usually your body can cool itself by letting heat escape through the skin and by sweating. When these fail, a person can become sick.*

Anyone can be a victim of a heat-related illness, such as people working or exercising under the sun when it is hot. However, those most at risk are:

- Children under five
- People over age 65
- People with chronic illnesses and disabilities
- People taking certain medications

## Signs and Symptoms

**Heat Cramps** can happen because of loss of water and salt from heavy sweating. Heat cramps can cause muscle pains and spasms. They are not as serious as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

**Heat Exhaustion** symptoms include cool, moist, pale or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness and exhaustion. Body temperature may be near normal.

**Heat Stroke** symptoms may include hot, red, dry skin; fainting or passing out; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. Body temperature can be 105 degrees or higher.

## First Aid Treatments

**Heat Cramps:** Get the person to a cool place and have him or her rest comfortably. Lightly stretch the cramped muscle, and give the person a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes.

**Heat Exhaustion and Heat Stroke** are two heat-related illnesses that can be deadly if not treated right away.

**Heat Exhaustion:** Get the person out of the heat and to a cool place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths such as sheets or towels. If the person is conscious, give cool water to drink. Make sure he or she drinks slowly. Give a half glass of water every 15 minutes. Let the victim rest in a comfortable position, and watch carefully for changes in his or her condition.

**Heat Stroke is a life threatening situation. Help is needed FAST! Call 911 or your local emergency number.** Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the person by putting them in a cool bath or wrap wet sheets around their body and fan them. Watch for signs of breathing problems. Keep the person lying down. If the victim refuses water or is vomiting, or has fainted, do not give anything to eat or drink.

## Heat Alert Warnings

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) alerts the media and local health officials when the Heat Index is 105 degrees or higher. The Heat Index is a measure of temperature and humidity that tells how hot it actually feels.

Listen to the radio or the TV, or call your local health department to find out if a Heat Alert has been given. The phone numbers are listed on the back panel.

**Pay Attention** to family members, friends and neighbors.

**Make sure they are coping well with the heat, particularly if they are elderly, young, or ill.**

**Working in air conditioning is the best way to prevent heat-related illness.**

*This brochure is for information only and is not a substitute for medical advice for the conditions mentioned here.*